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SPIDER-MAN 2099
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2099
LEONARDI
WILLIAMSON

I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND AT FIRST, LYLA.
I HADN'T REGISTERED THAT I'D UNDERGONE A CHANGE. EVERYTHING WAS NUMB.
I WAS STARING AT MY HANDS, BUT MY VISION WAS SO WHACKED THAT I REALLY DIDN'T SEE THEM.
NOTHING VENTURED...
THERE WAS A BUZZING IN MY EAR. I STILL DON'T KNOW IF IT WAS AARON DELGATO'S VOICE...
...OR MY SUBCONSCIOUS MIND SCREAMING AT MY CONSCIOUS MIND, TELLING IT NOT TO LET ME IN ON WHAT HAD HAPPENED.
BUT I'D FIND OUT... SOON ENOUGH.
STAN LEE PRESENTS THE ORIGIN OF SPIDER-MAN 2099 BY
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AARON WAS YELLING... MY NAME, PROBABLY. I TRIED TO FOCUS ON HIM, NOTICING FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT HE WAS THERE...
HE SEEMED HUGE... DISTORTED. EVERYTHING DID.
AAAA-RON...
G...GET BACK! KEEP AWAY FROM ME, O'HARA!
KEEP AWAY!!
SH-OOM
AAARONNN! STOPPPP!
SHOOM
STTTOPPP!!

I WON'T LET YOU KILL ME!
I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU'VE MUTATED INTO!
I WON'T LET YOU KILL ME!
WILL YOU... SHUT THE SSSHOCK UP... FOR ONE...
DANGER
WHABOOM

B-GHOOM
HOLD ON, AARON! I... GOT YOU!
PULL ME UP! PULL ME--
EEYYAA! HURTS! IT HURTS! YOU'RE KILLING ME!
KILLING YOU? YOU MORON! I'M SAVING YOU!
STOP SQUIRMING!
MY ARM! YOU'RE RIPPING THE SKIN OFF!!
STOP IT! LET GO! LET GO LET GO LET--!
AARON, WE'RE A BAZILLION STORIES UP! STOP FIGHTING--
AARON!!
RIP

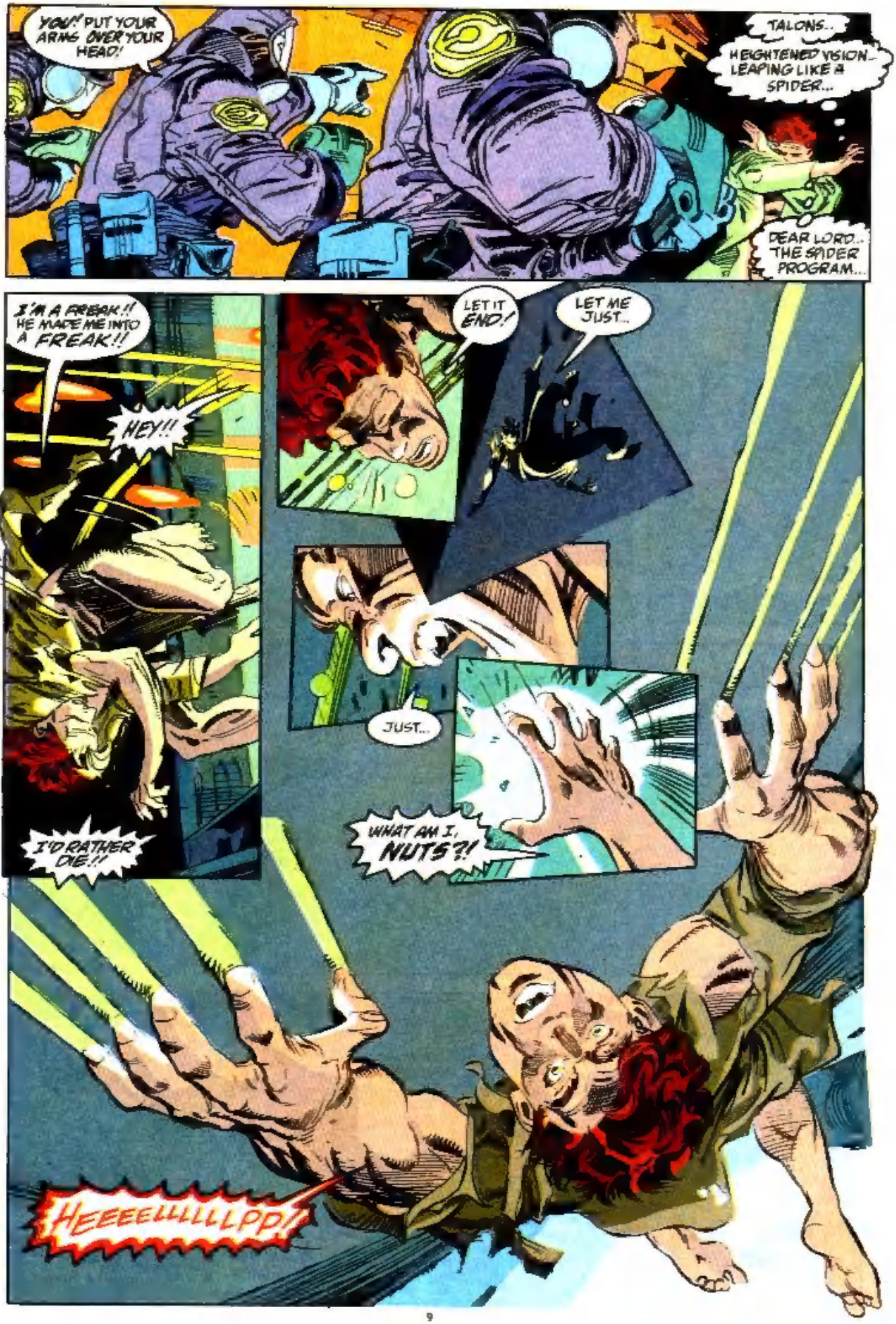
AARRONNN!

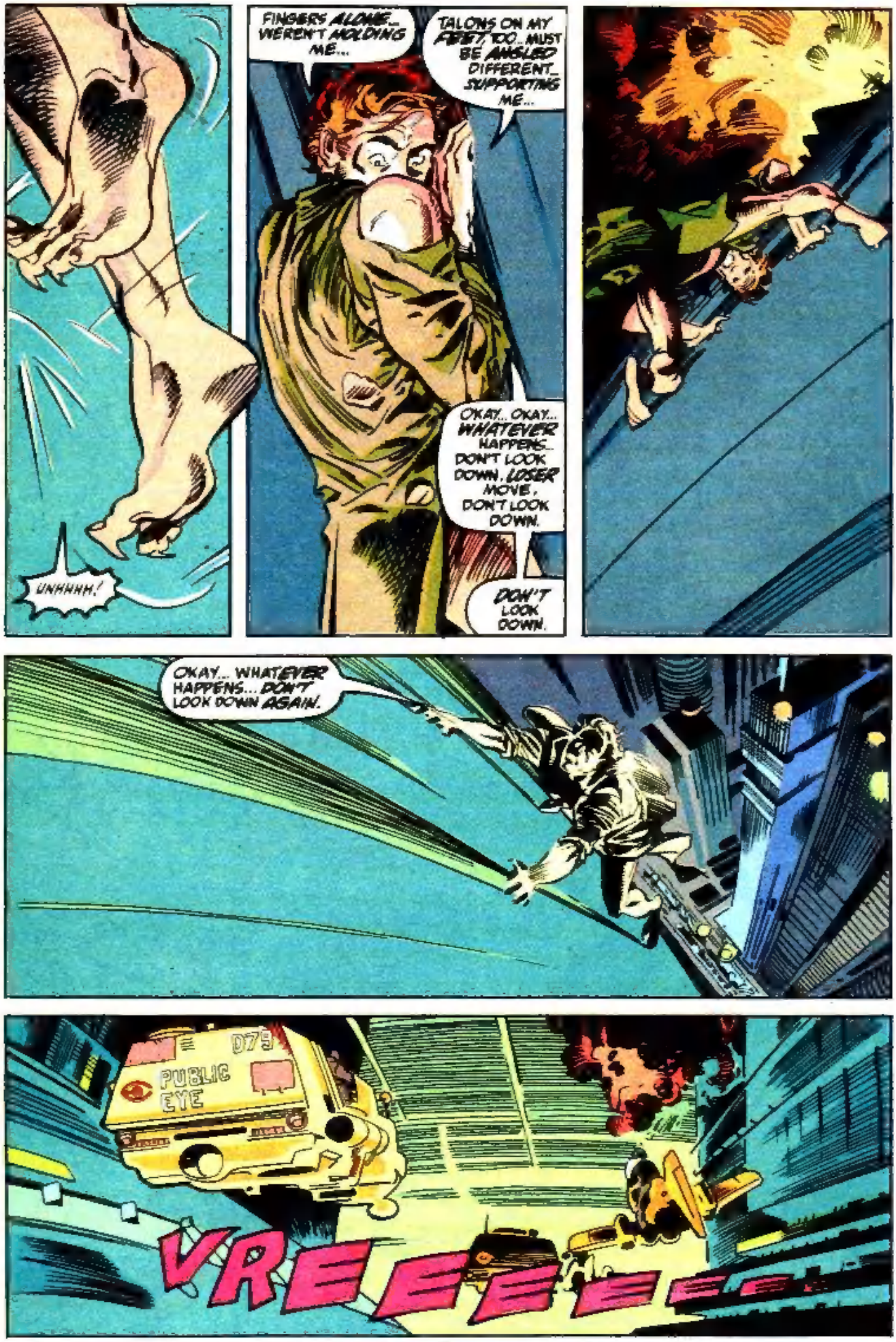
WH... WHY WAS HE STRUGGLING? I WASN'T HURTING HIM!
I WAS HOLDING HIM AS TIGHT AS I...
...I...
...OHHH, NO! OH NO!

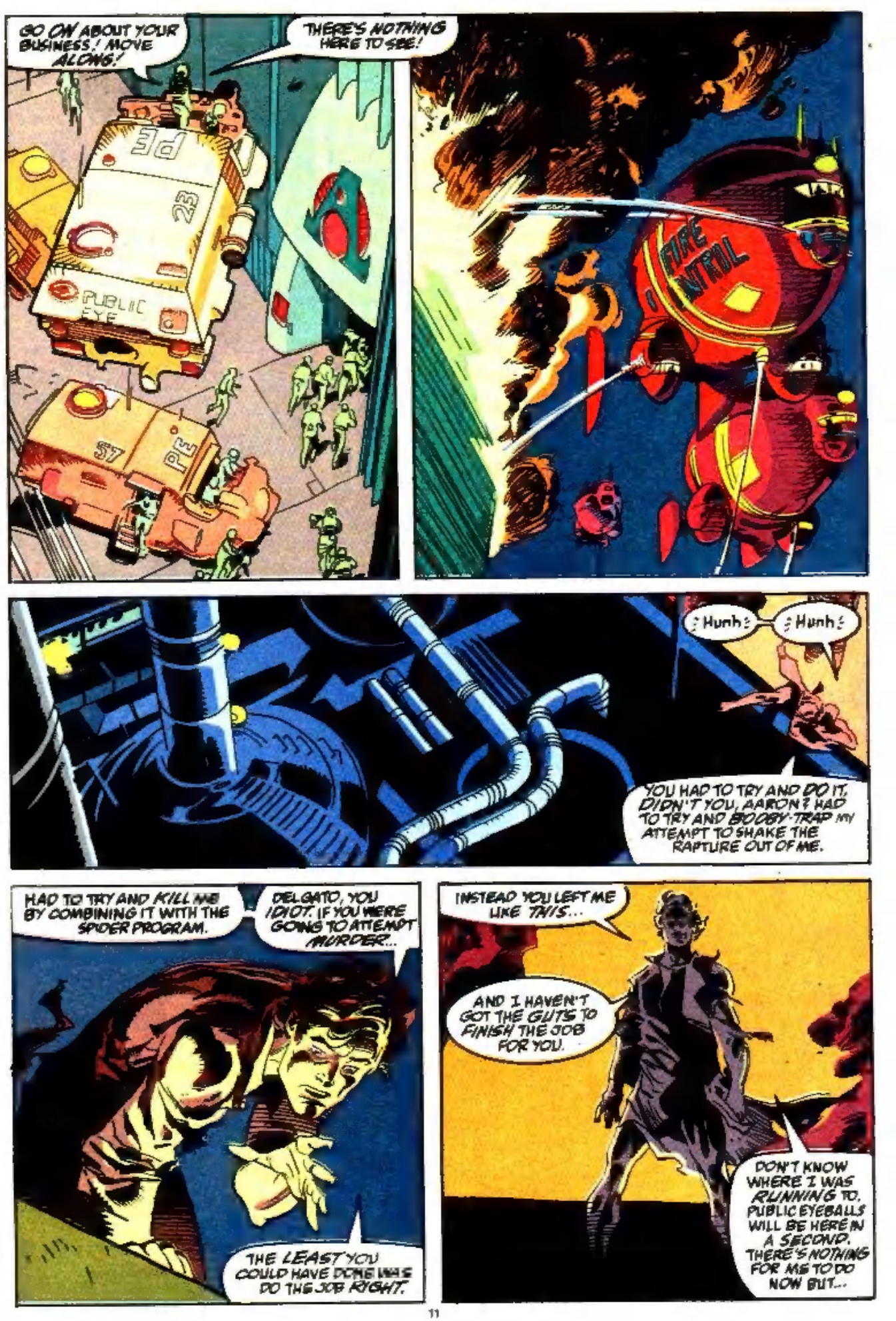
THROUGH HERE! THE BLAST ORIGINATED THROUGH HERE!
TAKE IT SLOW.

MY HANDS.. WHAT'S HAPPENED TO MY HANDS? WHAT'S HAPPENED...
...TO ME...

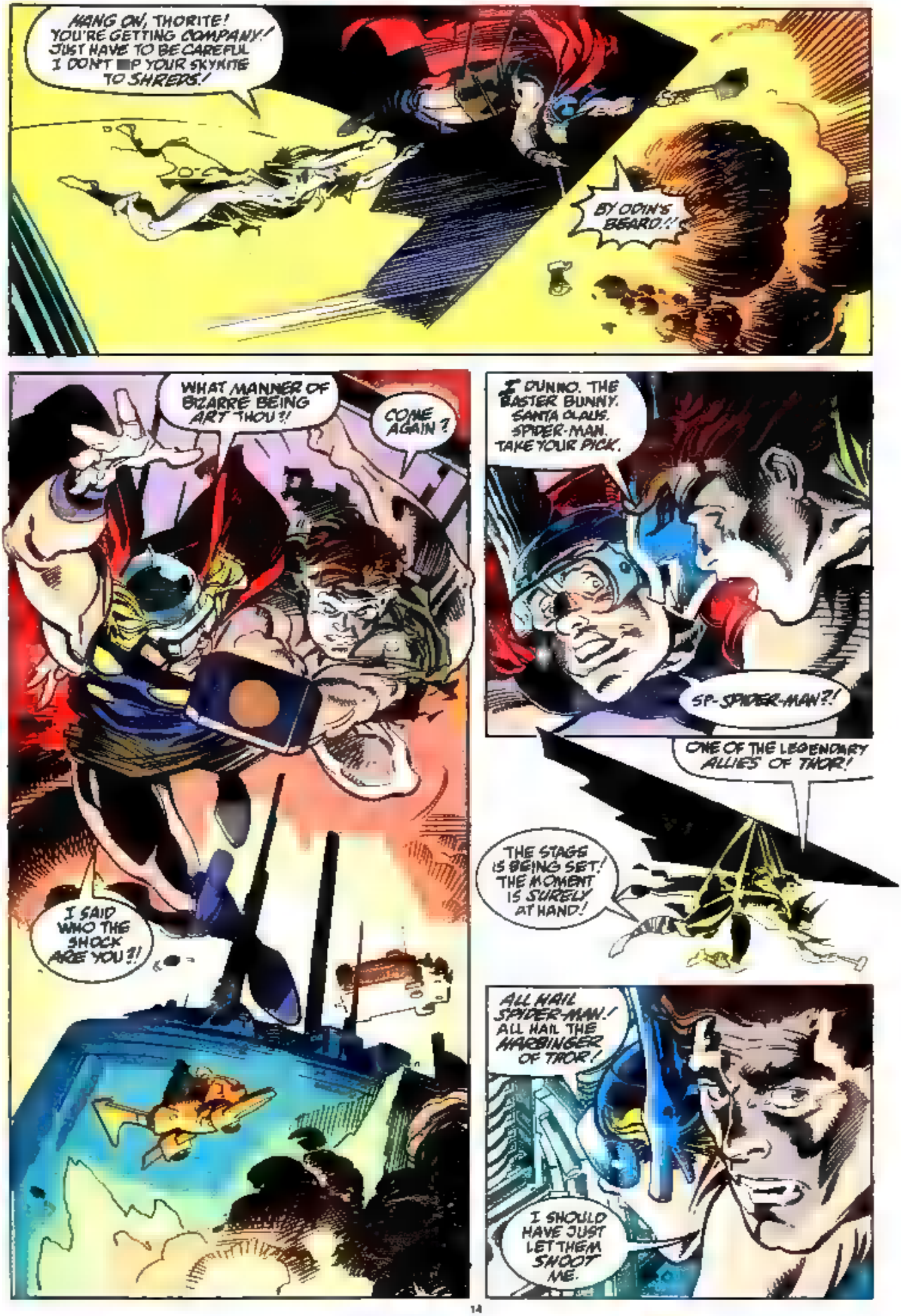
THERE'S SOMEBODY UP AHEAD! SHINE THE LIGHTS OVER THERE!


YOU! PUT YOUR ARMS OVER YOUR HEAD!
TALONS..
HEIGHTENED VISION..
LEAPING LIKE A SPIDER...
DEAR LORD.. THE SPIDER PROGRAM...
I'M A FREAK!! HE MADE ME INTO A FREAK!!
HEY!!
I'D RATHER DIE!!
LET IT END!
LET ME JUST..
JUST...
WHAT AM I, NUTS?!
HEEEEELLLLLPP!

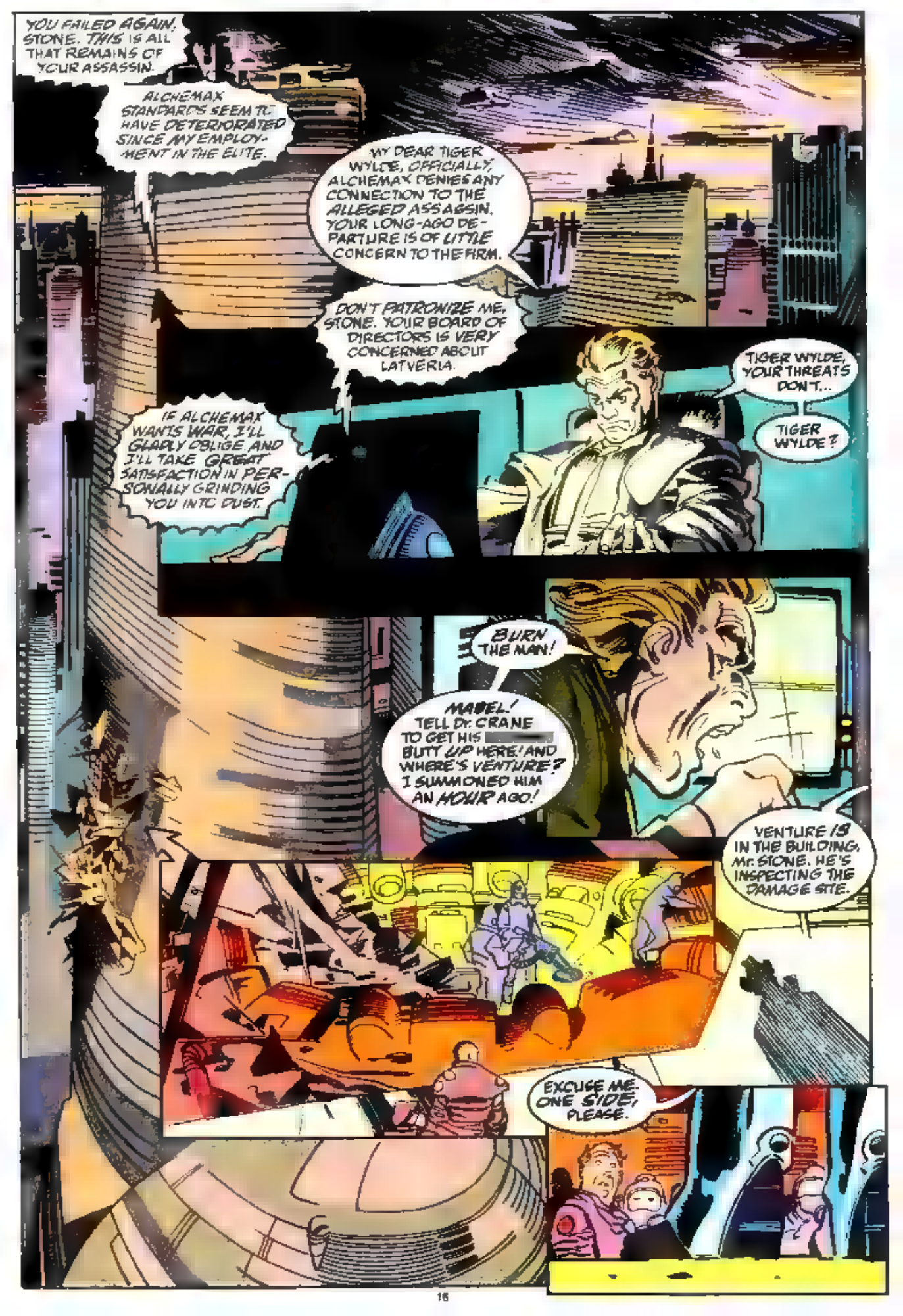

UNHHHH!
FINGERS ALONE... WEREN'T HOLDING ME...
TALONS ON MY FEET, TOO.. MUST BE ANGLED DIFFERENT... SUPPORTING ME...
OKAY.. OKAY... WHATEVER HAPPENS... DON'T LOOK DOWN. LOSER MOVE, DON'T LOOK DOWN.
DON'T LOOK DOWN.
OKAY... WHATEVER HAPPENS... DON'T LOOK DOWN AGAIN.
D79
PUBLIC EYE
VREEEEEE


GO ON ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS! MOVE ALONG!
THERE'S NOTHING HERE TO SEE!
PUBLIC EYE
23
57
PE
FIRE CONTROL
Hunh
Hunh
YOU HAD TO TRY AND DO IT, DIDN'T YOU, AARON? HAD TO TRY AND BOOBY-TRAP MY ATTEMPT TO SHAKE THE RAPTURE OUT OF ME.
HAD TO TRY AND KILL ME BY COMBINING IT WITH THE SPIDER PROGRAM.
DELGATO, YOU IDIOT. IF YOU WERE GOING TO ATTEMPT MURDER...
THE LEAST YOU COULD HAVE DONE WAS DO THE JOB RIGHT.
INSTEAD YOU LEFT ME LIKE THIS...
AND I HAVEN'T GOT THE GUTS TO FINISH THE JOB FOR YOU.
DON'T KNOW WHERE I WAS RUNNING TO. PUBLIC EYEBALLS WILL BE HERE IN A SECOND. THERE'S NOTHING FOR ME TO DO NOW BUT...

REPENT!
REPENT, ALL OF YOU! REPENT, TYRANTS OF ALCHEMAX!
A NEW DAY IS DAWNING!
OUR LORD THOR WILL BE RETURNING..
AND HE WILL SMITE DOWN THE FROST GIANTS OF INDUSTRY!
HEY! HOLD ON!
REPENT! REPENT, TYRANTS OF--
HUH?

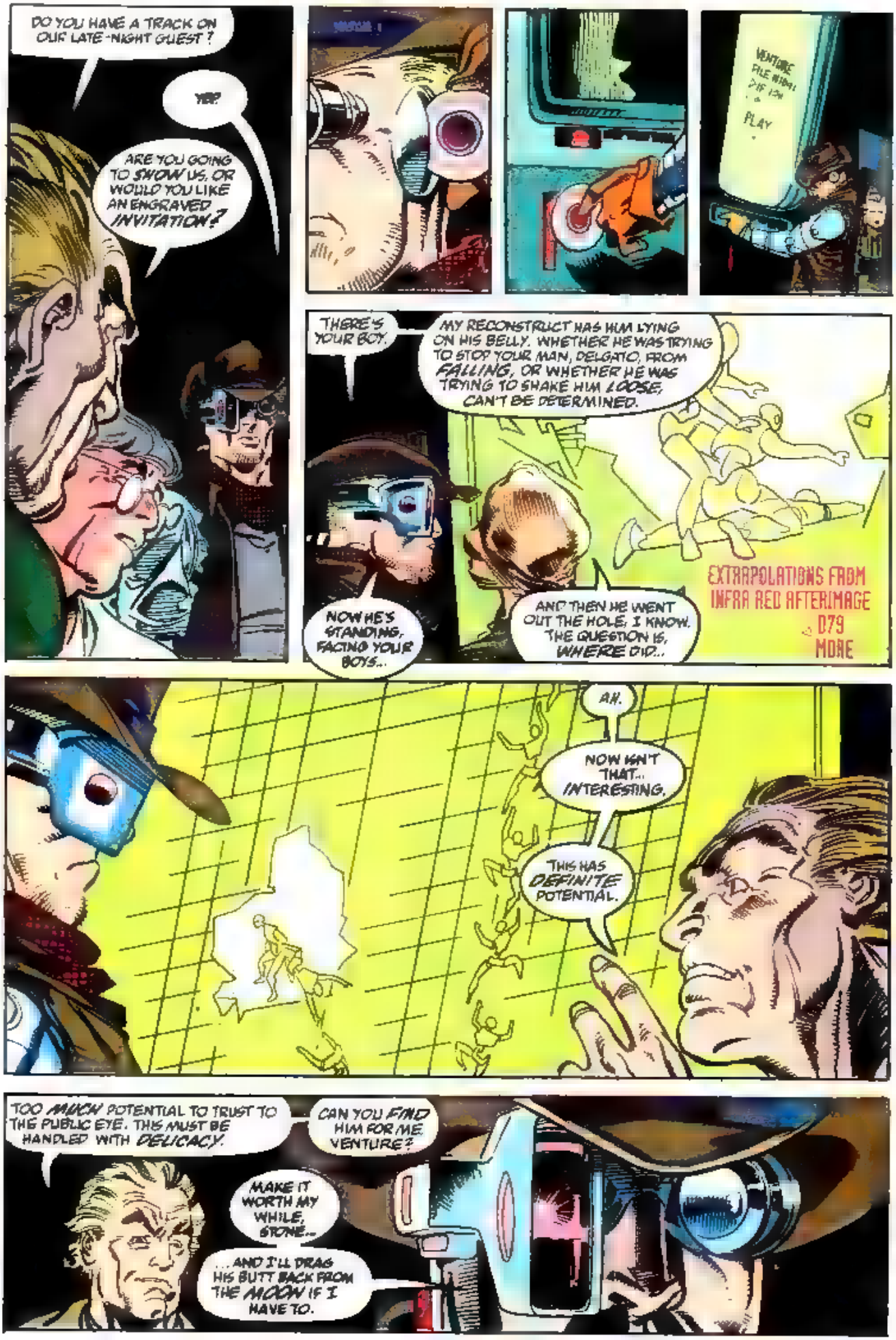

HANG ON, THORITE! YOU'RE GETTING COMPANY! JUST HAVE TO BE CAREFUL I DON'T ■P YOUR SKYKITE TO SHREDS!
BY ODIN'S BEARD!!
WHAT MANNER OF BIZARRE BEING ART THOU?!
COME AGAIN?
I SAID WHO THE SHOCK ARE YOU?!
I DUNNO. THE EASTER BUNNY. SANTA CLAUS. SPIDER-MAN. TAKE YOUR PICK.
SP-SPIDER-MAN?!
ONE OF THE LEGENDARY ALLIES OF THOR!
THE STAGE IS BEING SET! THE MOMENT IS SURELY AT HAND!
ALL HAIL SPIDER-MAN! ALL HAIL THE HARBINGER OF THOR!
I SHOULD HAVE JUST LET THEM SHOOT ME.

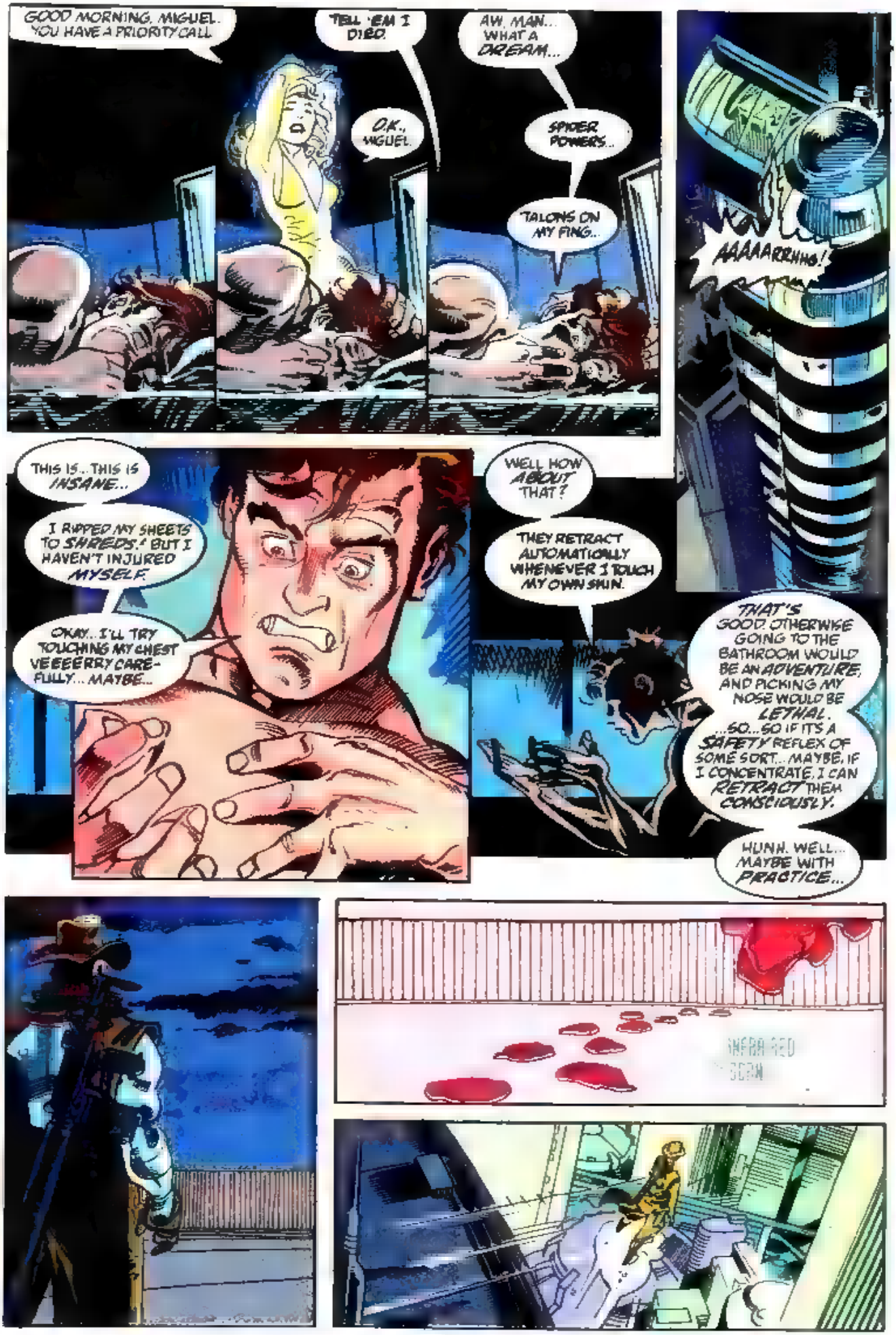
STEADY! STEADY!
YOU'RE COMING IN TOO F--
WHOA!!
UNHHH!!
SORRY. I WRECKED UP YOUR SKY-KITE PRETTY GOOD. MAYBE YOU CAN... I DUNNO... SEW IT BACK TOGETHER OR SOMETHING.
TAKE THE CLOTH WITH YOU. MASK YOURSELF. THE SPIDER-MAN MUST BE MASKED!
GOOD IDEA. I DON'T THINK ANY OF THE PUBLIC EYEBALLS SAW MY FACE. BEST THING TO DO IS COVER UP BEFORE ANY FURTHER RISKS.
THANKS FOR THE LIFT.
IT WAS MY HONOR! AND REMEMBER! THOR IS COMING!
YEAH. SWELL. I'LL SET AN EXTRA PLACE.


YOU FAILED AGAIN, STONE. THIS IS ALL THAT REMAINS OF YOUR ASSASSIN.
ALCHEMAX STANDARDS SEEM TO HAVE DETERIORATED SINCE MY EMPLOYMENT IN THE ELITE.
MY DEAR TIGER WYLDE, OFFICIALLY, ALCHEMAX DENIES ANY CONNECTION TO THE ALLEGED ASSASSIN. YOUR LONG-AGO DEPARTURE IS OF LITTLE CONCERN TO THE FIRM.
DON'T PATRONIZE ME, STONE. YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS IS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT LATVERIA.
IF ALCHEMAX WANTS WAR, I'LL GLADLY OBLIGE AND I'LL TAKE GREAT SATISFACTION IN PERSONALLY GRINDING YOU INTO DUST.
TIGER WYLDE, YOUR THREATS DON'T...
TIGER WYLDE?
BURN THE MAN!
MABEL! TELL Dr. CRANE TO GET HIS [redacted] BUTT UP HERE! AND WHERE'S VENTURE? I SUMMONED HIM AN HOUR AGO!
VENTURE IS IN THE BUILDING, Mr. STONE. HE'S INSPECTING THE DAMAGE SITE.
EXCUSE ME. ONE SIDE, PLEASE.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, VENTURE?
YOUR JOB.
BLAST EFFECT
17
37
FOOTPRINT AFTERIMAGE
17.3
JUST STANDS THERE, STARING. ALL THESE "ELITE" GUYS GIVE ME THE CREEPS.
PHONE BOOTH
QUIET. I BET HE CAN HEAR YOU NO MATTER HOW YOU WHISPER.
YOU'D WIN YOUR BET.

OUR SPY IN LATVERIA WAS DETECTED AND DISPOSED OF, DOCTOR, DESPITE YOUR ASSURANCES TO THE CONTRARY.
DISPOSED OF? BUT... BUT THE PERSONAL ARMOR WE PROVIDED SHOULD HAVE PROTECTED HIM FROM...
YOU CAN TAKE CONSOLATION IN THE FACT THAT, FROM WHAT TIGER WYLDE SHOWED ME, THE ARMOR APPEARS TO BE IN ONE PIECE.
THE OCCUPANT HOWEVER, IS NO LONGER WITH US.
I SUGGEST, DOCTOR, THAT YOUR FUTURE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ALCHEMAX INTELLIGENCE PROGRAM BE OF HIGHER CALIBER... OR THERE'S EVERY POSSIBILITY THAT YOU WILL NO LONGER BE WITH US AS WELL.
AH. VENTURE. YOU'VE ARRIVED, FINALLY.
I DO EVERYTHING FINALLY.


DO YOU HAVE A TRACK ON OUR LATE-NIGHT GUEST?
YEP.
ARE YOU GOING TO SHOW US, OR WOULD YOU LIKE AN ENGRAVED INVITATION?
VENTURE FILE #1841 2-IF 12M
PLAY
THERE'S YOUR BOY.
MY RECONSTRUCT HAS HIM LYING ON HIS BELLY. WHETHER HE WAS TRYING TO STOP YOUR MAN, DELGATO, FROM FALLING, OR WHETHER HE WAS TRYING TO SHAKE HIM LOOSE, CAN'T BE DETERMINED.
NOW HE'S STANDING, FACING YOUR BOYS...
AND THEN HE WENT OUT THE HOLE, I KNOW. THE QUESTION IS, WHERE DID...
EXTRAPOLATIONS FROM INFRA RED AFTERIMAGE
D79
MORE
AH.
NOW ISN'T THAT... INTERESTING.
THIS HAS DEFINITE POTENTIAL.
TOO MUCH POTENTIAL TO TRUST TO THE PUBLIC EYE. THIS MUST BE HANDLED WITH DELICACY.
CAN YOU FIND HIM FOR ME, VENTURE?
MAKE IT WORTH MY WHILE, STONE...
...AND I'LL DRAG HIS BUTT BACK FROM THE MOON IF I HAVE TO.


GOOD MORNING, MIGUEL. YOU HAVE A PRIORITY CALL.
TELL 'EM I DIED.
O.K., MIGUEL.
AW, MAN... WHAT A DREAM...
SPIDER POWERS...
TALONS ON MY FING..
AAAAARRHHG!
THIS IS.. THIS IS INSANE...
I RIPPED MY SHEETS TO SHREDS.' BUT I HAVEN'T INJURED MYSELF.
OKAY.. I'LL TRY TOUCHING MY CHEST VEEEERRY CAREFULLY... MAYBE...
WELL HOW ABOUT THAT?
THEY RETRACT AUTOMATICALLY WHENEVER I TOUCH MY OWN SKIN.
THAT'S GOOD. OTHERWISE GOING TO THE BATHROOM WOULD BE AN ADVENTURE, AND PICKING MY NOSE WOULD BE LETHAL. ...SO... SO IF IT'S A SAFETY REFLEX OF SOME SORT.. MAYBE, IF I CONCENTRATE, I CAN RETRACT THEM CONSCIOUSLY.
HUNH. WELL... MAYBE WITH PRACTICE...

LYLA, [redacted] THE WINDOWS. THE SUN'S KILLING MY EYES.
DARKENED MIGUEL.
PRIORITY CALL AGAIN.
WHO THE SHOCK IS IT?
YOUR BROTHER, GABRIEL.
OH, LORD. OKAY, PUT IT THROUGH.
MIGUEL.
MAN, YOU LOOK LIKE TOXIC WASTE.
THANKS, GABE. WHAT DO YOU WANT?
WHAT DO I WANT? MIG, [redacted] CALLED ME LAST NIGHT. SHE WAS FREAKING OUT. SHE SAID YOU WERE FREAKING OUT. NOW I'M FREAKING OUT. WHAT'S GOING ON WITH YOU?
NOTHING, GABE. NOTHING.
I'M COMING OVER THERE.
NO! DON'T!
TRANSMISSION BROKEN.
TERRIFIC.
Y'KNOW, IT'LL COST ME A [redacted] BUT I'LL HAVE TO START BUYING ALL MY CLOTHES MADE FROM UNSTABLE MOLECULES FABRIC. OTHERWISE, ONE WRONG MOVE AND "RRRIIIIPPP."
ONLY THING I OWN MADE FROM UMF IS THIS DEATH'S HEAD COSTUME I BOUGHT WHEN I WENT TO MEXICO LAST YEAR FOR THE DAY OF THE DEAD FESTIVAL.
FESTIVAL CAN GET PRETTY WILD. I WANTED SOMETHING EXTRA STURDY.
MAYBE I SHOULD START WEARING IT ALL THE TIME. THE FESTIVAL CELEBRATES THE DEAD. [redacted] MY DAYS OF BEING NORMAL ARE [redacted]
I'M DYING BY DEGREES. HOW'S THAT SONG GO? "IF THEY'RE GOING TO KILL ME TOMORROW LET THEM KILL ME ONCE AND FOR ALL. PREP COFFEE, LYLA. BLACK.
YOU SEEM DISTRESSED, MIGUEL. WOULD A CHANGE IN MY [redacted]PEARANCE IMPROVE YOUR MOOD?
I HAVE 298 DIFFERENT APPEARANCES AND PERSONALITIES IN MY FILE THAT YOU [redacted] MOST VIEWED YET.
WORLD'S GREATEST BRAIN
YEAH? LIKE WHAT?

C'MON YA SLAG OFF! GET YOUR BUTT IN GEAR! WHAT'RE YA SITTIN' AROUND MOPIN' FOR, YA PIECE OF--
+ Ahem +
CERTAINLY, SIR, AN INDIVIDUAL OF YOUR BREEDING AND TASTE CAN PUT HIS INTELLECT TO GREATER USE THAN MERE SULKING.
I KNOW! INSTEAD OF THAT NASTY COFFEE, I'LL MAKE YOU SOME [redacted] MILK AND SOME OF MY CHEWY [redacted]
MEANTIME, YOU GO PUT ON A WARM SWEATER. YOU'RE SO FRAGILE... I WORRY ABOUT YOU SO.
KILL THAT ONE.
GABRIEL IS HERE. SHALL I LET HIM IN?
IF YOU DON'T HE'LL JUST CHEW HIS WAY THROUGH THE DOOR. GO AHEAD.
OKAY, MIG. YOU WANT TO TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHY'S IT SO [redacted] HERE? WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU? WHAT DID THAT "COMPANY" OF YOURS DO TO YOU? DANA SAID YOU WERE STRUNG OUT ON RAPTURE.
WHATEVER HAPPENED TO, "HI, BIG BROTHER? HOW'S IT GOING?"
WHY ARE YOU MUMBLING?
BECAUSE I'VE GROWN FANGS AND IF I OPEN MY MOUTH TOO WIDE YOU'LL SEE THEM. NOW WILL YA SHUT UP A MINUTE.
HA, HA. VERY FUNNY.

LOOK, I KNOW YOU'RE SHORT-TEMPERED. ME TOO. WHEN YOU'RE HALF MEXICAN, HALF IRISH, YOU'RE NOT GONNA BE MR. SWEETNESS AND LIGHT.
BUT YOU HAVE TO BE SQUARE WITH ME.
OKAY. LOOK. I WAS ON RAPTURE, YEAH. BUT I BEAT IT. OKAY? PROBLEM SOLVED.
NOBODY BEATS RAPTURE! IT BONDS GENETICALLY! I'M NO BIG-BRAIN SCIENTIST LIKE YOU, BUT YOU'RE THE ONE WHO TOLD ME THAT!
WELL, I WAS WRONG. EVEN BIG BRAINS HAVE OFF-DAYS.
GREAT. NOW MY FOREARMS ITCH. WHAT NEXT? MY HEAD FALLS OFF?
MIG.. I KNOW YOU FEEL SOME DEGREE OF LOYALTY TO ALCHEMAX. THEY FOUND YOU. EDUCATED YOU. SHOT YOU THROUGH THE RANKS. GAVE YOU FREE REIN.
AND YOU'VE [redacted] WILLING TO TURN A BLIND EYE TO WHAT THEY'RE ALL ABOUT. BUT YOU CAN'T KEEP DOING THAT.
IT'S A BAD PLACE, MIGUEL.
WITH BAD PEOPLE.
THE CORPORATE RAIDER PROGRAM... IT'S EVIL, MIG. IT'S WRONG. IT'S..
WE'RE DONE TALKING, GABRI.
WHA-- NO WE'RE NOT?!
YES, WE ARE. I'LL CALL YOU LATER.
AND GABE... WATCH YOUR BACK.
BYE.
BUT... BUT...

MIGUEL! YOU CLUCK! YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO TEAR MY JACKET!!
I WAS RIGHT! THAT'S VENTURE DOWN THERE! I RECOGNIZE HIM FROM THE ALCHEMAX "ELITE CORPS" FILE.
PSIONICALLY ENHANCED HEAT TRACKER AND CYBORG. HE'LL FOLLOW ME STRAIGHT UP HERE. I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF...
FOR THE MOMENT... VENTURE'S NOT LOOKING FOR MIGUEL O'HARA. HE'S LOOKING FOR THE SPIDER-MAN WHO ESCAPED FROM THE ALCHEMAX BUILDING.
BUT WHAT GOOD WILL RUNNING DO? WHEN THE TRAIL LEADS TO MY APARTMENT, I'M NAILED!
I'VE ONLY GOT ONE SHOT.
THE ONLY WAY TO PUT HIM OFF THE TRACK OF THE ROAMER...
LYLA! WHERE'S THAT HAND-HELD QUICK-SEALER?!
ON YOUR WORK BENCH, MIGUEL.
...IS TO GIVE HIM THE LATTER.
THE LIGHT BYTE CLOTH FROM THE THORITE'S SKYSAIL WON'T BE ENOUGH TO KEEP ME FULLY ALOFT... BUT WITH THE COMBINATION OF UPDRAFTS AND MY AGILITY... IT MIGHT BE ENOUGH TO...
INFRA RED SCAN

LYLA! OPEN THE WINDOW!
THE WINDOWS DON'T OPEN, MIGUEL. THEY'RE SEALED FOR YOUR PROTECTION.
MIGUEL... I'M CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR SAFETY.
ALL RIGHT. THE UPDRAFTS SHOULD CATCH THE LIGHT BYTE CLOTH RIGHT ABOUT...
NOW!
I SAID...
RIGHT ABOUT...
NOW!
I SAID...

HEAT IMPRESSIONS ARE GETTING STRONGER. LOOKS LIKE I'M CLOSING IN ON...
eh?
KLA-THUMP!
GOOD THING THE GLIDER MATERIAL FINALLY KICKED IN... OR MY ESCAPE ATTEMPT WOULD HAVE BEEN RULED SUICIDE.
OKAY... CAUGHT HIM FLATFOOTED. NOW... HAVE TO SAY SOMETHING THAT WILL SHAKE HIM UP. SHOW HIM WHO'S BOSS.
AND NOT LET HIM KNOW THAT I'M TERRIFIED OUT OF MY SKULL.
SOMETHING LIKE... LIKE...

HI.
THAT WASN'T IT.
Next: NOTHING GAINED!